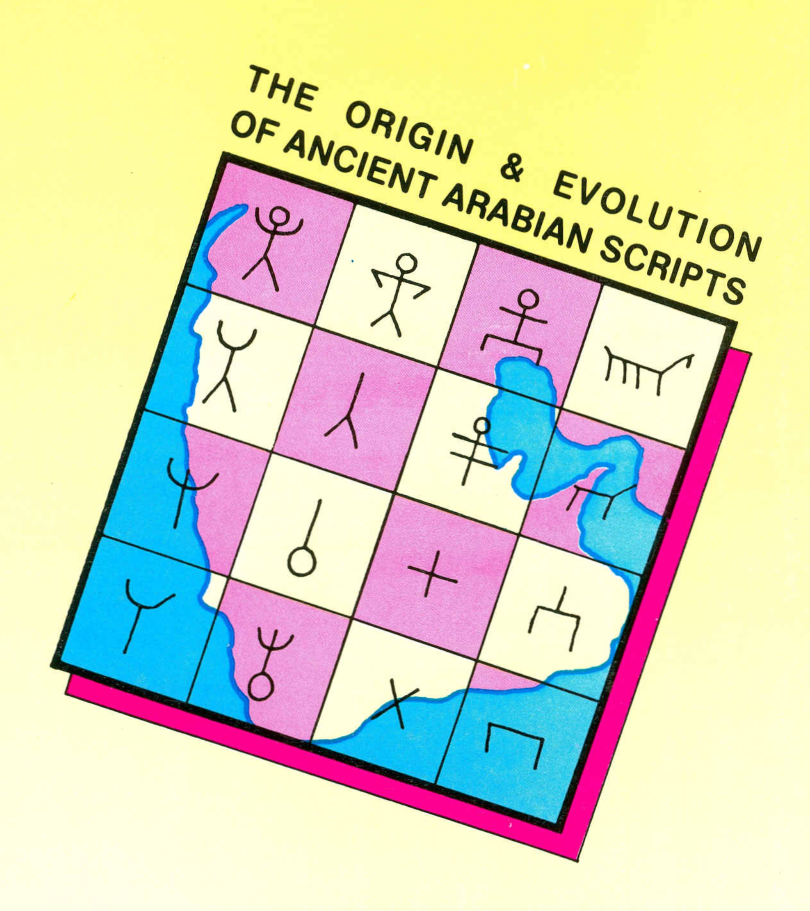


MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES
AND MUSEUMS

THE ORIGIN & EVOLUTION OF ANCIENT ARABIAN SCRIPTS



BY: MAJEED KHAN

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
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KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
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In the name of Allah, the most mercifull, and most compassionate

FOREWORD

Research into detailed topics of Saudi Arabian antiquities has, indeed, come of age. Not long ago, the scientific community often decried the virtual lack of primary research materials on the ancient history of this vast semi continent. Now, however, the abundance of source materials (e.g.. Atlal) and the avialability of discursive analytical studies, as attested by the present contribution, all testify for the new status and near maturity of Saudi Arabian archaeology.

Dr. Khan has consistantly shown, ever since his early association with the Department of Antiquities and Museums in Riyadh ca. 1976, an abiding interest in the studies of ancient petroglyphs and pictogrpahs, popularly known as rock art and graffitti. He has participated in well over a dozen major field expeditions on the subject, thanks to the introduction of the "Comprehensive Saudi Archaeological Survey" and its offshoots "The Epigraphic and Rock Art Survey Program". Thus he has clearly gained a fundamental grounding in the rudiments and diversity of his subject unmatched by any other of his colleagues. This has presented him with a unique opportunity and a very serious challenge at the same time. I believe, he has met both with a fairly successful academic response. His main doctoral thesis was the outcome of a painstaking comparative analysis of rock art traditions in the northwest of Saudi Arabia across the millennia from early palaeolithic to late Neolithic ages. The theme oriented itself toward eliciting meaningful paradigms that has emerge from such a vast field of highly introspective and erratic primitive art.

In this present more modest yet highly controversial work. Dr. Khan diagresses into a more subtle form of interpretation of the ancient rock art of Saudi Arabia. He proposes an evolutionary scheme of origin for the earliest writing script. This is based, literally, on the equivocal signs and designs of the graphic art adorning rock facades throughout the landscape of the modern kingdom. To the extent that his thesis presents a coherent thematic interpretation of the data, he has done an enormous contribution to the vital subject of the origin of early or proto-Arabic script in the peninsula at large.

I am confident that his effort will inspire a great deal of reaction and further research. Some will be adverse criticism, but many others will continue and carry on toward achieving a new and more profound synthesis of current scientific knowledge about the origin and evolution of Arabic writing script. Dr. Khan's rudimentary steps on that noble scientific quest will be long remembered and admired.

Dr. Abdullah H. Masry
Assistant Deputy Minister
for Antiquities & Museums

PROLOGUE

In the history of nations - Arab Bedouins - are scracely mentioned. They were thought to be people of no prominent culture and traditions. The overall picture drawn mostly by the Europeans is thrilling and dizzying. The Bedouins are usually mentioned as rough, robust and uncultured people. The reason is the lack of knowledge and prejudiced attitude towards the people with whom the historians and travellers had no or little acquaintances.

My first research for a Ph. D, was on the rock art of Saudi Arabia. I do not think it is an exaggeration to claim that my work is the first systematic attempt to understand the cultural, religious and social life of Arab Bedouins through the most neglected record of pristine Arabs that is - rock art. Hundreds and thousand of human and animal figures and other geometrical and non representational motifs which are depicted by the prehistoric man of Arabia on rocks, are, for me, like the open leaves of a book which preserved the records of the daily life of indigenous Arab Bedouins. It was during this research that I was first struck by many unique and strange rock art compositions which I later recognized as ''Proto--Bedouin Writing System''. Here I first realised that the old concept and theories regarding the origin of writing are to be re-evaluated.

This research is the merit of the Comprehensive Rock Art and Epigraphic Survey of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, conducted by the Department of Antiquities and Museums during 1984 to 1992. Over 1000 rock art and inscription sites have been recorded. Surprisingly, not a sinlge Sinatic, Proto Sinatic, Phoenician, or any other inscription which may represent a transitional element between Sinatic and South and North Arabian ancient writings could be recorded from the entire Kingdom. On several sites occasional Musnad, al-Janubi is found superimposed on Thamudic, but not even in a single case we could find Thamudic superimposed on al Musnad-al-Janubi. How could Thamudic evolve from al Musnad al Janubi, as is generally thought, or how could Proto-Sinatic or Sinatic play any role in the evolution and development of Arabian scripts while none of these exist in the entire peninsula.

It is generally thought that Egypt and Mesopotamia were the cradle of civilizations. In Arabian Peninsula, Yemen is considered as the core of Arabian culture and civilization, Hijaz and Najd are totally neglected. They are not taken into account at all. The Arab Bedouins are considered as desert nomads, hunters and food gatherers. The reason is that the concept of Arab Bedouins was not clear among European travellers and historians. The locations of hundreds and thousands of rock art images is the proof that thsoe who parcticed rock art were living in those areas for long times. Phillologists and Epigraphists did not pay any attention towards rock art. Although they accept rock art as a possible source of prehistoric

communication but they could never trace the evolution of writing from those images. Here in Saudi Arabia, the pristine Arabs - the ancient bedouins created a pictographic and later pictographic cum ideographic communication system, which ultimately led them towards the origin of writing.

We know that Greeks borrowed writing from Arabs. The Greeks and Romans developed art from abstract to naturalistic style and reached to the peak of its beauty and fantasy. While Arabs developed their communication system by gradually changing the naturalistic art style into schematised and more simplified images, ultimately developing a writing system. If Greeks were great artists and lovers of art and beauty, early Arabs where phillosphers and intellectuals. If the Greeks used art for their aesthetic pleasure, Arab filled the intellectual and phillosophical horizon by their most outstanding achievement of creating writing through the same images. It is the beauty and fantasy of Greek, Roman and the Egyptian art and the hieroglyphic writing which attracted the attention of all the world, but unfortunately the most intellectual part which Arab Bedouin played in the creation of writing did not come to the notice of researchers.

The material of this research is obtained during the Comprehensive Rock Art and Epigraphic Survey of the Kingdom. The initial concept of the theory is based on my doctoral thesis which includes a small chapter on the evolution of writing from rock art. Further evidence was obtained during seven seasons (each consisting of two to three months field work) of rock art and epigraphic survey during which almost entire northern Saudi Arabia, parts of Central and southern Saudi Arabia were thoroughly investigated.

I extend my most profound gratitudes and thanks to His Excelency Dr. Abdullah H. Masry whose personal interest in the rock art and epigraphic research program and the material he made available to me made possible this research. I am grateful to Professor Peter. J. Ucko of the University of Southampton for his guidence and advise and one who showed great faith and enthusiasm in my work. I am particularly thankfull to my colleague Abdul Rahman Ali Al-Zahrani for his advise, consultations and cooperation during the field work and the translation of this paper into Arabic. I also thank my colleagues Mr. Abdul Rahman al-Kabawi and Mr. Abdul Rahim al Mubarak and Mr. Khalid M. Eskoubi for their suggestions and Mr. Muhammad Abdulaziz for preparing the chronolgoical chart and Mr. Salah al Helwa for making the map.

Dr. Majeed Khan
Riyadh, 1993

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF ANCIENT ARABIAN SCRIPTS

During this century, a great deal of theoretical reconstruction of the evolution of ancient Arabian script has been put forward by European philologists. Most of the epigraphic material was collected by travellers and archaeologists who had little or no real knowledge of philology. The first large scale documentation of epigraphic material from Saudi Arabia was carried out by Jaussen and Savignac in 1904; although Muller (1889), Doughty (1884) and Huber (1819) had also reported various inscriptions and published some of them as well. In the second half of this century Beeston (1962, 1971, 1976), Ryckmans (1953,1954, 1973, 1976), Pirenne (1975) Winnett and Reed (1962, 1970, 1977, 1979), Jamme (1967), Mendenhall (1977), and several others had published a tremendous amount of Arabian inscriptions and put forward various hypothetical suggestions regarding the possible evolution of ancient Arabian scripts.

Arab philologists and histroians such as Fakhri (1952), Shaid (1971), Sharāfaddin (1975), and Al-Jasser (1976) have also written short accounts on ancient Arabian scripts such as Thamudic and Lihyanite etc. Still the basis for all of the studies remained at which was initially put forward by European philologists; little has been added to previous theories regarding the history of writing in the Arabian peninsula.

In view of the variety of scripts and forms that are found in the Arabian Peninsula, most of which are closely related to each other, such as Thamudic, Lihyanite, and al-Musnad al Janubi (Epigraphic South Arabian), it appears more logical to trace the origin of these scripts within the Arabian Peninsula.

Recent methodical rock art investigations in Saudi Arabia (see Atlal vols. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13) have suggested that a new hitherto unexplored body of evidence can shed light on the origin of writing and its possible evolution. It suggests a different source; one to which philologists paid little or no attention, that is rock are itself. It is observed that the pristine Arabs used to carve simple pictures, or series of pictures, of different animals and humans which perhaps had no clear connection with any linguistic form. As the pictures could be understood just by seeing them, they do not have to correspond to any sign or sound of a spoken language. These pictures, which were intially depicted as realistic images of certain animals later seem apparently to have been used as symbols for coded messages. We may consider it as the earliest form of pictographic cummunication known in the area.

This pictographic communication is comparable to the pictographic communication systems of early New World populations, the African and the Australian aborigines, and many other preliterate societies. These systems do not, ofcource, resemble in the least to what we call writing, but a study of their pictographs at least gives us

the idea how ancient peoples learned to communicate through pictures and signs and how the idea of writing developed in primitive societies. Long before the origin of writing, thousands of years ago, primitive man somehow began to draw human and animal figures on the walls of the caves or rock shelters or the rocks of his surroundings. Such rock shelters and other open rocks displaying large number of figures are widely scattered throughout the Arabian Peninsula. These date back thousands of years. Like any archaeological artefact made by man and used by him, a figure depicated on a rock is also an artefact, with a meaning both for its executor and its user. Thus prehistoric art may help in defining patterns of different cultures: when the assemblage is classified chronologically, each carving in a specific style represents a different stage in the cultural sequence. As a result of comprehensive archaeological surveys, a chronology of human settlement for northern Saudi Arabia as well as other parts of the Kingdom, has been fairly well established (Zarins et al 1978; Whalen et al 1980; Gilmore et al 1981; Copeland et al 1969; McClure 1978). From a chronology of rock art alone it can be deduced that in almost all archaeological periods from the early Neolithic onward man was living in the Arabian Peninsula and was engaged in the artistic creation of hundreds and thousands of human and animal images on the rocks (Khan 1990).

We do not know how rock art was first originated in Saudi Arabia. What we know is that if the origin of rock art was just by chance, created by random drawing of lines, or whatever way or the reason of its creativity was, later it developed into an intentioal and purposeful activity and subsequently became a vital source of communication in prehistroic Arabia.

The origin of rock art in Saudi Arabia may be clarified by future work, but at present evidence is that it first occured in the Upper/Epi-Palaeolithic period between ca. 9000-7000 B.C. This dating is based on the stone artefacts located from the earliest and the only Epi-palaeolithic rock art site of kilwa in northern Saudi Arabia. The figures consist of a large and outlined unidentifed beast, outlined ibexes and a human figure. The figures were made by outlined, sparse, irregular and rough grooves, apparently directly hammered into the rock with some pointed tool. Kilwa in northern Saudi Arabia is the only site which could tentatively be dated Epi-Palaeolithic. However, the rock art sites of subsequent periods are frequently located in various parts of the country particularly in the northern parts of the Kingdom. Due to the lack of Epi-palaeolithic sites in other parts of Saudi Arabia, the chronological chart of Saudi Arabian rock art represents only those phases the art of which is found in considerable number. Thus starting from the Neolithic onward.

The relative, tentative chronological phases (see plate 20) suggest that the earliast rock art of phase I is distinctive in having large - sized human and animal figures depicted in bass or low relief with detailed realistic physical features, except the faces

which are usually obscure. Considerable skill and labour went into their design and the representation of details such as ornaments, clothings, shoes, weapons etc. (see plate 1). It is interesting that on all the major early rock art sites of Jubbah, al-Hanakiyya, Tayma and al-Ula, the art content and style is almost identical thereby suggesting a homogeneous population with similar social, cultural and perhaps religious values. On the basis of stone artefacts located at Jubbah and Hanakiya, and on the basis of C-14 analysis of Jubbah lake and its sediments (Gerrad et al 1980) it is possible to tentatively attribute the rock art of these cities to the early Neolithic period.

Various phases of rock art are recognized on the basis of superimpositions; archaeological artefacts such as stone tools located from the rock art sites, correlation of depicted animals with the climate and environment suited for them (e.g. cattle surive only in a cool and humid climate and camel in hot and dry climate), and the patina difference in relation to other superimposed figures (for further details see Khan et al. 1987 Atlal vol. 10).

The second phase of rock art possibly represents the art of the late Neolithic period in which Arabia witnessed a drastic and rapid chagne in climate from cool and wet to hot and dry conditions. The number of cattle representations in rock art diminishes greatly and equids, cervids and caprids are overwhelmingly depicted. The sites of Jebel Tawal-al Nafud (north of Hail), Milihiya and Janin in Northern Saudi Arabia are excellent examples demonstrating the change in fauna in the rock art.

The rock art of second phase is recognized by its specific mode of schematisation and stylisation in human and animal represntations (plate 2,3); completely absent are large sized human and animal figures similar to those of earlier period located at Jubbah and al-Hanakiya. The typical funnel-shaped faces of cattle of the early phase are replaced by small circular, triangular or concial-shaped faces. Horns are usually exaggeratedly large and highly stylised. Masked anthropomorphic figures, usually in dancing attitudes (plate 2) form another unique criterion of this period. Boomrang, quivers, clubs and throwing sticks found in the earlier phase of rock art, do not occur in the second phase.

Several different styles can be attributed to the second phase as well as a variety of forms in cattle horns, while in the oldest earliar phase, the same generally definable styles were known.

Chalcolithic sites are more frequently found in northern Saudi Arabia, which are usually located near square or rectangular shaped stone structures, "kites", stone circles etc. These are associated with rough hand made pottery and stone artefacts like tabular flints, side and end scrapers, awals, micro awls and large choppers. These characteristics are common to the Arabian Chalcolithic and that of neighbouring

areas of Jordan, Palestine and Sinai (Kaplan 1969; Helms 1976; Parr et al 1978; Zarins et al 1979, 1980: Gobling 1980; Betts 1980-85). Several rocks located from these cities contain Petroglyphs showing similar styles.

The third phase of rock art which could tentatively be attributed to the Chalcolithic period usually exhibits a common art style and contain representations of gazelles, deer, ibexes, goats and a limited number of short horned cattle with stylised horns. Human figures are usually schematic, outlined or "stick" style. Stick human figures first become common in this period, while idoliform representations with abstract bodies and naturalistic facial features dominate the art content. Also foot prints and meandering or serpentine forms frequently found in this pahse of rock art repertoire (plate 4).

Our knowledge of the archaeology of the Bronze Age in Saudi Arabia is very limited - it is marked at present by a gap in the archaeological record in the northern, western, central and southern regions. However, various records suggest that camels were present in Arabia as early as Chalcolithic, but their use as a domesticated animal is only confirmed in the late Bronze Age, when it was used by the Midianites to invade Palestine about 1400 B.C. (Wilson 1984).

The total absence of camel figures in the rock art of earlier phases 1 and 2,3 and their sudden appearance in subsequent periods could be due to the change in the climate and the growing use of camel instead of cattle which could not survive in the extreme hot and dry conditions. Thousands of camel representations are located all over northern Arabia and elsewhere in Saudi Arabia, and these could well be attributed to the period of hot and dry weather prevailing in the Bronze Age. Evidence of camel have been discovered from the excavations in Bir Hima and the site of Sihi in southwestern Saudi Arabia (Zarnis et al 1979 and 1980) and from Dhahran tumulus fields (burinal mounds) in eastern Arabia, which are dated to 1500-100 B.C. (Frollich 1987).

On the basis of this information it may be assumed that the change in the faunal repertories in the fourth phase of Saudi rock art from cattle to camel possibly took place during the Bronze Age. The other important and noticeable criteria of rock art of phase 4 is the location of large numbers of foot and hand prints; stick human figures and outlined animal representations in association with certain geometrical motifs and symbols. Also camel figures are shown with "wusums" or camel brands (plate 5).

The last phase of rock art is characterised by an overwhelming number of depictions of camel figures. Human and animal stick figures and other geometric motifs dominated the rock art assemblege of this period (plate 6B). Ancient Arbian scripts such as Thamudic, Lihyanite and Musnad - al-Janubi (Epigrephic South Arabian)

evolved during the Iron Age. This is the period which marked the appearance of various Arabian scripts. The rock art was also practiced which usually included representations of camels, ostriches, lions, ibexes, dogs, deer, gazzeles and hand prints etc.

I must emphasize here that the typology for each cultural period represents a general outlined framework of the various styles which are commonly found in that particular phase or period. Ofcourse, in each cultural period there was often more than one style, but some are more frequent, dominating and restricted to a particular phase (plate 20). The unique character of Saudi Arabian rock art appears to be the persistence of certain styles and their continuity over long periods. This continuity of art tradition for a long period and the persistent use of the same animals (like cattle in pahse 1, and camel in phase 4 and 5), reflects a very strong tradition sustained over an extensive time--scale. Indeed within each rock art phase we find little fresh creativity and few new ideas.

Analysis of the rock art assemblege from different phases of northern Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Kingdom suggests that the (overlooking. the rock art of the earliest period ie Kilwa) rock art (of phase 1) is the best and most outstanding in skill, technique and almost realistic representations of human and animal figrures. It may be considered as representational art in which emphasis is given to portray the physical features of the model. But this tradition does not seem to continue long and in the later periods the art become mostly schematised and stylised. Schematisation implies simplification of reality. The mode of schematisation generally involves the elimination of fine realistic details and the simplification of contours, but at the same time maintaining the identity of the original object. The rock art of Saudi Arabia shows a tradition of continued schematisation in each cultural period. The traits are modified, reduced, simplified according to the associated themes and according to the intention of the artist. Thus schematisation is an important element which may be used in recognizing the art of different cultural periods, because in each period the style and mode of schematisation varies. Thus the art of the Late Neolithic can be distinguished not only on the basis of styles or relationship with the available cultural objects from the sites, but also on the basis of recognition of mode of schematisation and its unique stylisation

The masked human figures in dancing attitudes (plate 2A) male and female represntations with fully pecked bodies (which could be differentiated on the basis of protruding or rounded posteriors in the case of females and flat in the case of males) are the major schematised traits of phase 2.

The rock art of phase 3 is characterized by highly schematised (almost abstract) human bodies and realistic facial features (by contrast to phase 1 and 2), Large

compositions of rock art containing several species of animals, including several geometric and other non-represntational motifs, suggest that the art was used for certain specific purposes, probably for recording messages or events (plate 4). Also the appearance of stick hman figures in phase 3 indicates the growing use of rock art for communication purpose. The humanoid or idoliform figures apparently do not seem to be represnting real models; rather, artist seems to represent some unknown being, the creativity was thus, based on ideology and imagination, and not on reality.

The continuous process of schematisation, simplification and modification of certain traits in human and animal figures, and inclusion of certain geometric motifs in the large compositions in phase 3, could be taken as the first step towards the origin of writing. The rock art of Saudi Arabia clearly indicates the evolution of styles from one period to another, which ultimately leads towards more shcematisation and abstraction, finally reaching a stage at which no more schematisation of stick human and animal figures was possible. The process of schematisation is, therefore, continuous and chronologial.

Stick human and animal figures first appeared in the rock art of phase 3 (Chalcolithic?) and become common in phase 4 (Bronze Age ?). A stick human figure consists of stick/linear limbs, and is depicted with maximum economy of time and effort, in which the artist represents a human (or animal) figure with minimum recognizable details of a model (plate 7). Human stick figures represent the last stage of schematisation, from which further reducation or simplification of an object is not possible. It is found that in the composition of human stick figures certain limb positions are constant and often depicted in some specific order. There is usually a uniformity and apparently a standard method of depicting postures on stick human figures. However, among them the four chief and standard canons which more frequently found in the rock art compositions of phase 4 and 5 are as follows :

1) Fully stretched arms with inverted "V" legs, ie.

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2) "U" shaped arms with inverted "U" shaped legs. ie.

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3) Fully raised arms with inverted "V" shaped legs. ie.

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4) Stretched arms with downwards pointing hands always with similarly depicted legs, ie

Various compositions of human stick figures, sometimes in association with animal figures and other non-representational motifs, are located at a number of sites in Tabuk, Tayma and al-Ula area of northwestern Arabia. In each such composition the limb positions of various human figures differ from each other. Also on some the limbs are reduced, modified, or absent. As we have already seen, the human or animal stick figures cannot be further simplified; hence the prehistoric artist split the limbs and then used them as signs and symbols. Seventy two different forms of human postures with varying limb positions have been so far recorded from the rock art compositions of northern Saudi Arabia (plate 20). The typology of human stick figures with simplified limbs and in varying postures revealed that in some cases the arms are absent, while on other the legs are not shown; in some one arm is absent, while on others the leg is absent, so that a difference is created by reducing or deleting some limbs. For example, on one of the sites of Wadi Damm in the Tabuk area, a composition of human stick figures shows a variety of limb positions (see below) and also (plate 7 A).

In the above illustration, human stick figures are situated in close association with each other, each Figure shows variations in its arm, leg and body posture. The artist has emphasised the limb positions, which are the dominant traits of these representations. Some are sexless, while on others the sex is exaggeratedly indicated; some are shown with fully raised arms, others with half raised and some with fully stretched arms. Similarly, the leg positions vary from figure to figure. Some are shown with stretched legs, some are depicted with inverted "U" shaped legs, while others have a "V" shaped form. The artist has differentiated one figure from the other through the positions of arms and legs and through attitudes. The panel constitiutes a single "composition" of different human stick figures. The indentical patina of all the figures, and their similarity in having small, systematically arranged, indirectly pecked grooves, suggest that these were possibly created at one time.

The vital question, then, regarding these and other human stick figures commonly found on many rock art sites around the Tabuk area, and elsewhere in nothern and some parts of southern Arabia (e.g. Taif, Raniys and Bisha etc.), is why they are usually arranged in such an organized and methodical manner, and why there is always

a variation in arm, or leg positions or other body traits ? There is no doubt that the arrangement of various human figures with different limb positions was deliberate and intentional. It is also important to note that in the above composition of human stick figures we find a deviation from the older traditional system of portraying human figures in social activities such as dancing, fighting or hunting etc. These figures on the contrary, appear to be inactive, lacking dynamism and without being involved in any social activity. Rather the work appears to have been carried out in a formulatic manner. The artist has assembled a constellation of motifs, which gives the impression that if the figures have been arranged with some specific purpose and intention, then the limb positions are indicative of a systematic formulation which is intended to communicate abstract ideas.

On the rock, the figures are methodically and systematically arranged, and there is a complete synchronisation and homogeneity among them. Some figures with their specific traits are repeated within the group, for example, figures 2 and 3, 11 and 18, 14 and 19, are quite similar in their form, shape, traits and limb positions. Their repetition in the same row and in the same composition of human figures, perhaps suggests that each had a definite symbolic meaning in itself, and it is possible they were repeated to make a message.

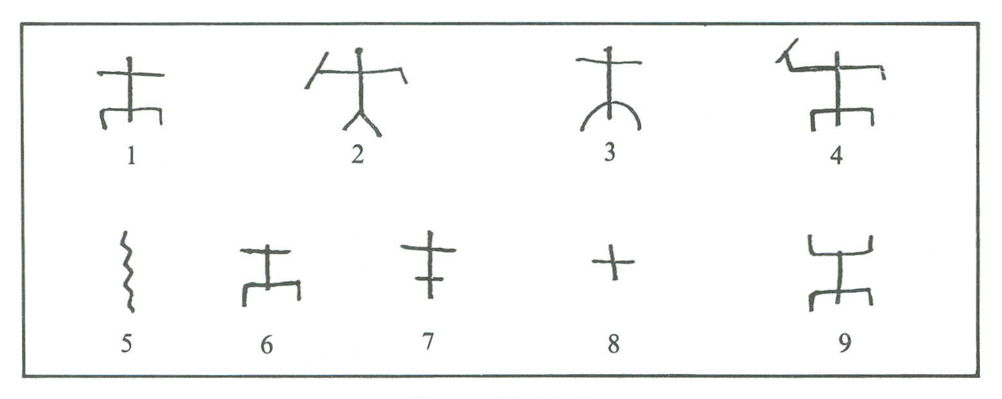
The four earliest forms of limb positions as shown earlier conform with the limb positions of human stick figures included in the general typology of northern Saudi Arabia (pp 19). This suggests that the tradition of depicting stick human and animal figures was initiated sometimes during phase 3 (Chalcolithic) but the tradition become more common during phase 4 (Bronze Age ?). This attribution of some of the stick figures to the Chalcolithic is based upon superimpositions of cattle on human stick figures, and cattle would not have survived in the peninsula during the harsh and dry climate of the Bronze Age. Dating is also established by reference to stone artefacts of the typical Chalcolithic period located on several rock art sites with stick human and animal figures. There is no doubt that the dating is relative and tentative; but it can be stated confidently that these compositions predate writing; as in no known case so far is such a composition found superimposed on a composition of the "Proto-Bedouin" type which I propose below. Furthermore, the difference in patina reliably indicates a considerable difference in the time period of the two phases.

It appears, hence, that in Arabian prehistory there was a system of communication for recording events, messages and stories etc. a system in which the same motifs were repeatedly used in various compositions, and which may be compared with an ideographic communication system in which the signs are constant, with each form used for the same denotational purpose. The motifs which apparently represent stick human and animal figures with reduced limbs or highly schematic canons assembled

together in large compositions, therefore, seem to be ideograms, thus suggesting a pictographic - cum - ideographic communication system predating the origin of phonetic writing.

Further evidance in support of the theory that human stick figures played a central role in the pictographic communication system prior to the origin of proper writing in Arabia, was obtained during the rock art reconnaisance of the northwestern region (1986, 87, 88) and southwestern Arabia (1989, 90, 91, 92), as a result of which thousands of human stick figures were recorded from over 1000 sites. The typology of these indicates 72 different forms of human limbs (pl. 20). The comprehensive survey results revealed many new forms of human stick figures, varying in their arm and leg positions, attitudes, compositions and their association with animal stick figures and with other geometric and non-representational motifs. A few examples are included here.

A panel located at Khayber, north of Al-Madinah al-Munawara in northwestern Arabia, consists of the following composition :

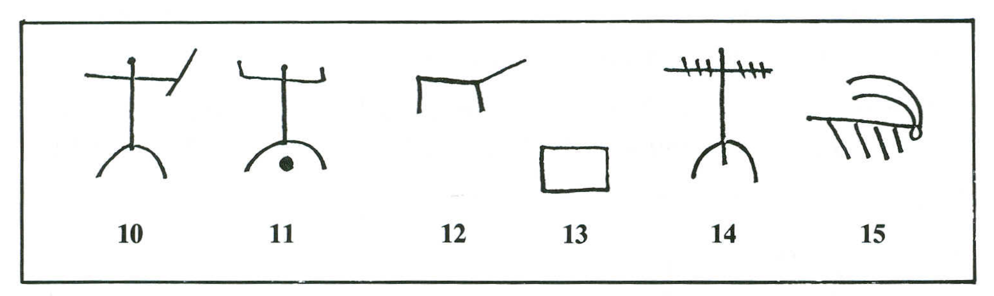


* Site No.: 205-195 S

In the above composition, each human stick figure is depicted in such a way that its arm and leg positions differ from any other figure of the same compostion. If the arms on three figures (1,3,6) are similar, their leg positions are different, and where the arms and legs are identical (figs. 1,6), the difference is created by the absence and presence of a sexual trait. The meandering line (fig. 5) and the motifs (7,8) are placed within the composition as additional motifs. The meandering line (fig. 5) is almost identical to the Bedouin (so called Thamudic) letter 'sh' and the sign (+) is used as the letter 't' in the Bedouin (Thamudic) alphabets . The arrangement of human stick figures, each with a different arm and leg position, and the intrusion of geometric motifs among these figures, suggests a purposeful and intentionally formulated scheme.

* Site number is the registeration number of a site catalogued by the survey team of the Department of Antiquities and Museums-Riyadh

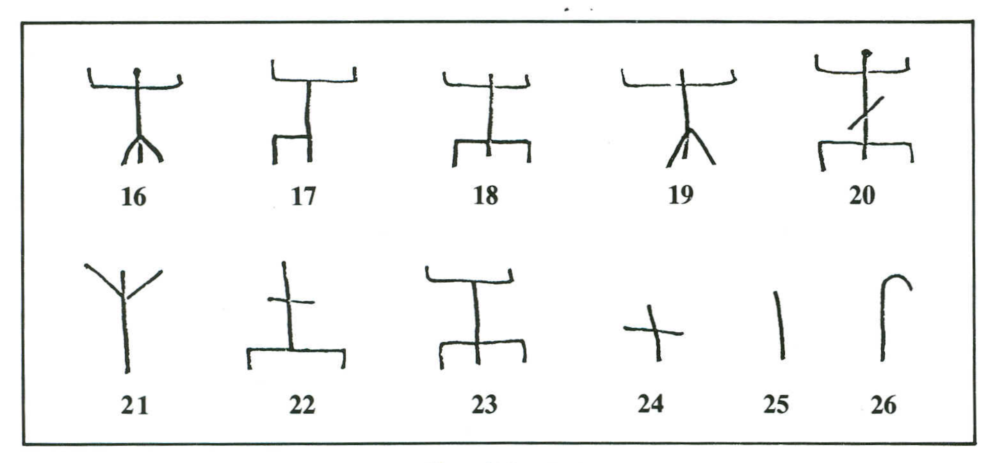
The organised arrangement of figures is not due to chance but conforms to many other examples in northwestern Arabia and elsewhere in the southern region of the country. For example another panel from Wadi Rum at al-Ula, presents the following scheme :



Site : 204 - 294 S

On this panel, along with human stick figures and motifs, a stick ibex is also included. Note that on figs. 10 and 11 the legs are similar, but the arm positions differ and a circular mark in between the legs of fig. 11 is perhaps meant to indicate a female. If the leg positions of the motif is reoriented, it becomes similar to the letter , while the motif fig. 13 is identical to the Bedouin (Tamudic)* letter □

A comparatively larger composition of human stick figures and motifs is located at al-Ula :

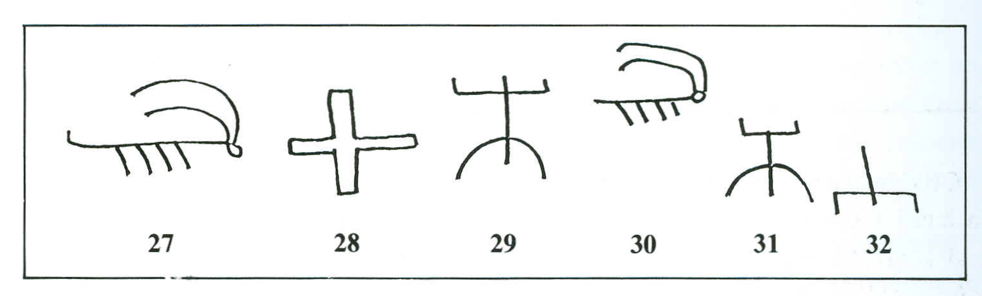


Site : 204 - 354 S

* The term "Tamudic style of writing", named after an ancient Arabian tribe, does not seem to be appropriate for a script which is located not only in a large part of the Arabian Peninsula, but also as far as Jordan and Syria. Ofcourse, there were several tribes living in these areas who were using the same script. As the writing is mostly located in the deserts of Arabia it will be more appropriate to call it a "BEDOUIN SCRIPT". Furthermore, this term also suggests the evolution of the so called "Thamudic" from the "Prto-Bedouin", I, therefore, here propse to rename "Thamudic" as "Bedouin" script.

In this compostions figs. 16 and 19 are identical in their limb positions and, similarly, figs. 18 and 23 are also identical. Although the limb positions of fig. 20 are similar to those of fig. 18 and 23, a difference has been created by marking a diagonal line on its torso. Most interesting is the inclusion of three motifs (figs. 21, 24, 26) which are identical to three Tamudic letters corresponding to the English 'h', 't', and 'b' respectively (see comparative chart on plate 22 .

Another example from al-Ula shows a pair of ibexes, human stick figures and two motifs (figs. 28 and 32) indentical to the Thamudic letters ' + ' and '   ' (plate 9 A).



Site : 204 - 384 S

A uniqe example is presented below which suggests a different scheme of arrangement in which the figures are placed from top to bottom and from left to right in 'L' shaped form :

33

34

35

36

37 38 39

Site : 204 - 381 S

The artist appears to have made a special effort to maintain the proper arrangement of the panel in which the ibex (fig.34) is depicted vertically, thus maintaining alignment with other figures. Motifs 37 and 38 are indentical to the Bedouin (Thamudic) letters 'r' and 'sh'.

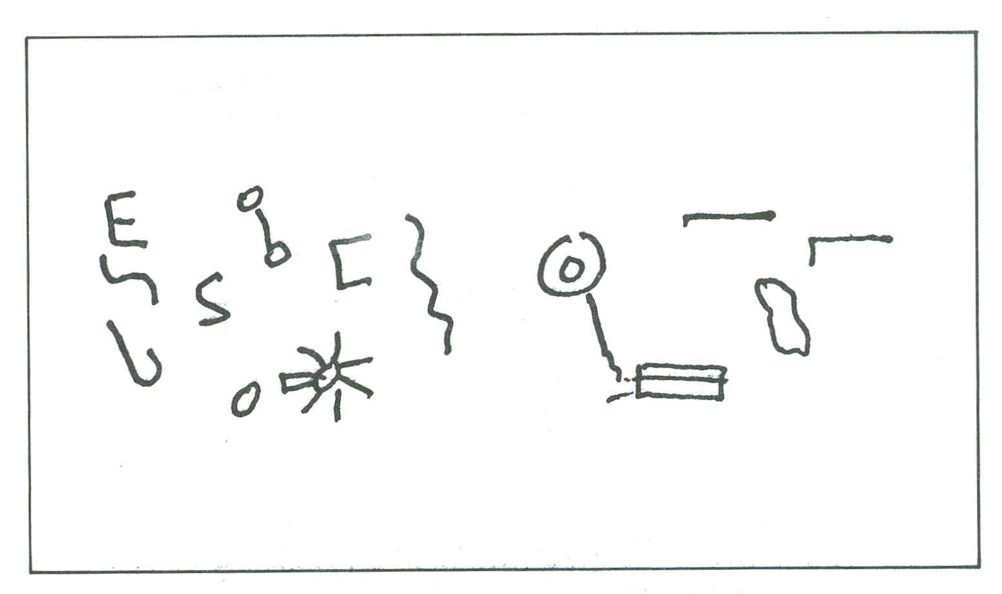
Moreover, the arrangement of figures in 'L' shaped form is consistent with the Bedouin (Thamudic) script, which is a script in which the letters are arranged from top to bottom or right to left or left to right.

All the examples discussed earlier occur either in isolation or depicted separately on rocks containing other figures. These and other similar panels are never found superimposed on inscriptions or in association with them. Also, the figures are usually arranged in a single or double row, even if apparently suitable empty sapce is available on the same rock.

The existence of stick human figures and their schematised limbs in the alphabets of ancient Arabian scripts, such as Thamudic, Epigrphic South Arabic, Lihyanite and Safaitic (pl. 19) support the thesis that prehistoric man in Arabia did not borrow them from any outside source; rather he was already familiar with these signs and had been using them in his earlier pictographic -cum- ideographic communication system which I am calling "proto Bedouin" (that is the system of writing of ancient Arabs), to denote a trasitional communication system predating the known scripts of Arabia. Although "Proto Bedouin" signs as yet are not readable, we have established that in compositions consisting of it, each human figure or each specific arm or leg position had some symbolic meaning. Thus for example, a human figure with "V" shaped arms and legs in inverted 'U' position may have a meaning different from those with 'U' shaped arms and inverted 'V' shaped legs. Similarly, the variations between raised arms, open palm, closed palm, stretched fingers, bent, open or closed legs, presence or absence of sexual traits or absence of legs or arms, suggest that each figure may have a specific meaning associated with it.

The development of a script from ideographic should inevitably be in a phonetic direction. The human stick figures with different forms of limbs, if in the beginning were ideograms later seem to have become "word signs" or logograms (that is signs for words of the language) or some of these were probably ideograms and other served as "word signs".

The further schematisation or simplification and modification of human stick figures and intrusion of increased number of non-represntational or geometric signs in the compositions of "Proto-Bedouin" script led the ancient man to develop a cursive form of script as can be seen in the following composition (plate 10B) :



An early stage of cursive form of writing

In the "Proto-Bedouin" compositions the ideograms and "word signs" do not resemble several objects, rather most of them represent human stick figures in different forms and attitudes. We seem, therefore, to be discussing a system of prehistoric communication, in which each motif does not represents an object only, but also expresses its function, such as, giving, taking or carrying etc. Thus a vocabulary of word signs was developed in which human activities were indicated by schematised human stick figures depicted in various attitudes (see plate 21). Each attitude would, thus, represent a compound syllable or "word sign" such as running, crying, taking, giving, advising, weaping, laughing, shouting, talking, dancing, worshipping, etc. Other signs resemble certain objects like sun ( ), snake ( ), head ( ), eyes ( ), arm or hand ( ), man ( ), and animal ( ). Further simplification of these compound syllables or 'word signs' and the introduction of other geometric and non-representational signs obviously resulted in the development of alphabets. Once a system of writing is understood, new sings are normally created only through formal changes, differentiations, and simplifications among the existing signs. If we look carefully, we will find that most of the Bedouin or so called Thamudic alphabets are either similar to human stick figures or their simplified limbs.

A composition of human stick figures from site 5 panel 4 located at Wadi Damm, northwest of Tabuk in NW Saudi Arabia. as shown on phase 10 includes the following simplified human stick figures which shows an evolution of the Bedouin (so called Thamudic) alphabets from human stick figures :

An evolution of the Bedouin (so called Thamudic) characters from human stick figures. (see page 13 also).

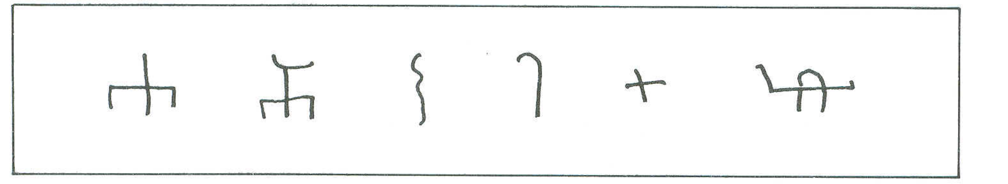
Bedouin (Thamudic) letters	Human stick figure
	Compare with fig. 6 (page 13)
	Legs of fig. 1
	Fig. 2
	Fig. 15
	Only one leg of an anthropomorph e.g. fig. 1
	Fig. 5 legs removed, also head removed, reduced canons.
	Fig. 2 in horizontal form
	Fig. 2 head removed, torso zigzag, change in trait.
	Stick human fig. arms removed.
	Fig. 18 torso and arms are removed, lower portion of human figure.
	Arms and legs removed.
	Figure 12
	Figure 9
	Position of torso altered from ‘ ’ to ‘ ’
	Compare with fig. 9
	Compare with fig. 12
	Human stick fig. arms and legs joined together.

We have no solid evidence to suggest an absolute date for the evolution and development of this system, but in relation to the stone artefacts of the Chalcolithic period located from the rock art sites with composition of human stick figures, and in relation to other figures and compositions, as well as superimposition and patina difference ect., it appears that the "Ptoto-Bedouin" system's initial evolution occured sometime during the 3rd and/or 4th phase (Chalcolithic or early Bronze Age ca. 2500 - 2000 B.C.) If we accept that the "Proto-Bedouin" is the transitional script (it may be the imaginary Proto-Semitic script of Bea, Sethe, Obermann and other philologists for which not a sherd of evidence is found as yet) between the early pictographic communication system and the evolution of alphabets, then, so advanced a stage of origin of "Bedouin" or the so called Thamudic alphabets from the "Proto-Bedouin" script demands a long period of evolution and development. Therefore, we may suggest a tentative dating for the development of the "Bedouin" (or Thamnudic) script between 1500 B.C and 1200 B.C

During the recent Rock Art and Epigraphic survey (1989) of southern Arabia, a number of Proto-Bedouin compositions have been located from Raniya and Bisha, at about 1800 km south of Tayma and al-Ula (where such compositions are already located in large numbers). The location of Proto-Bedouin writing panels at such a long distance apart from each other cannot be random or just per chance occurance. Rather it confirms a wide scale use of the Proto-Bedouin writing system in the peninsula. For example following compositions are located from Al-Qaniyah, about 9 km north of Raniyh (site no. 211 - 38 S) :

In each of the above compositions, human and animal stick figures are depicted in association with other non-representational motifs. Also in each panel, some motifs or signs are almost identical to some of the Bedouin (Thamudic) alphabets. For example in composition 1 ' ' is like ka'af (k); in panel 2 is indentical to Ba' (b) and in panel 3 forms , , are almost identical to Sa'ad (sa); Ain (a);

and Ta'a (t), repectively of the Bedouin or so called Thamudic alphabets. This continuous use of signs indentical to the Bedouin (Thamudic) alphabets in the compositions of the "Proto-Bedouin" writing system and the use of human and animal stick figures in phase 3 of rock art compositions, argue stronlgy for the evolution of the so colled Proto-Bedouin signs, from the earlier pictographic communication system in Arabia.
Another example of Proto-Bedouin writing composition comes from south of Bisha, in which the Bedouin (the so-called Thamudic) alphabets are more frequent and depicted along with a human and camel stick figures : (plate 9 B.).



We consider Thamudic (Bedouin) as the writing of the desert dwellers or "the Arab Bedouins", because it is located in large number in the deserts of Arabia. The possibility of an independent Arabian evolutiion of the so called "Thamudic" (Bedouin) script has not hitherto been considered by the epigraphists or philologists. Rather, Musnad -al-Janubi (ESA) has been considered as the oldest script of Arbia, and it has been generally suggested that it might have evolved either from Proto-Sinaitic or Phoneician. There is no doubt that Thamudic was the formal writing system of the Arab Bedouins, and that ample evidence has been presented here to demonstrate that it evolved within the Arabian Peninsula without outside influence. The chronology of rock art clearly indicates that motifs and signs; like triangles, circles, rectangles, meandering lines, as well as some human stick figures with reduced or simplified limbs, were already in use even before the origin of any scripts in Arabia. Therefore, we have no reason to suppose that some of the alphabets of the so called Bedouin (Thamudic) script, which include signs identical to a number of forms found as signs or symbols in rock art compositions predating formal "writing", evolved from Proto Sinaitic, Phoenician or any other writing system. On the contrary I believe that it is more logical to look into the possibility of the evolution of Proto-Sinaitic, Thamudic and Epigraphic South Arabic form a common origin in a much older system of wiriting that I have named "Proto-Bedouin". The suggestion is based on the fact that most of the signs used in the Proto-Sinaitic (see plate 19) are very similar to those of the "Proto-Bedouin" writing system, which were later incorporated in to the Bedouin (Thamudic) script. The above evidence suggest that the signs and motifs which are part of the "Proto-Bedouin" or "Proto-Sinaitic" are either true or modified forms of signs and motifs which are found in the rock art compositions of Saudi Arabia.

Thus, we witness a chronological sequence of transitional elements and the evolution and development of images, signs and motifs from one archaeological phase to another, within the internal structure of Arabian rock art tradition.

As yet no evidence of transitional elements of evolution of ancient Arabian writings have been produced by any of the philologists. The lack of any evidence regarding the possible evolution of Proto-Sinaitic, from either rock art or any other system; the similarity of most of the signs of Proto-Sinaitic to those of Proto-Bedouin, and the evidence regarding the evolution of Proto-Bedouin; within the rock art sequence of the Arabian Peninsula, raises a serious question as to the validity of the existing hypothetical suggestions, supported by various philologists, about the evolution of the ancient Arabian scripts.

If the letters of early Arabian scripts were created according to the sounds for certain objects, or if the letter signs originated as pictures of objects, then why is it that most of the Thamudic (Bedouin) letters do not resemble any other object than the human stick figures or their modified, reduced and simplified traits?

The available evidence suggests that 15 out of 27 Bedouin (Thamudic) letters are modified forms of human stick figures or of their simplified limbs, which have been incorporated into the script. Other letters appear to have been evolved or taken from the geometric motifs which are found in the Arabian rock art predating formal "writing" (plate 19). The above chart also indicates that not many of the Bedouin (Thamudic) letters appear to show any representatioal similarity to any recognizable object with the possible exception of the letter "☼" which could be said to resemble the sun. However, several other Bedouin (Thamudic) alphabetic signs were also in use in the rock art predating the writing, which are found in association with animal figures as camel or cattle brands (known as WUSUMS in the case of camel brands). The Bedouin (Thamudic) letters which might have derived from the geometric motifs are as follow :

Preliterary motifs	**Thamudic letters**	**English letters**
+	+	*t*
▭	⧅	*w*
▯	▯	*J*
○	○	*A'a*

Human stick figures are commonly found in the prehistoric rock art of northern Saudi Arabia and are extremely rare in the central, western or southern regions of the Kingdom. No human stick figures are reported by Anati (1968) in his work on Central Arabia. These are however, most frequent in areas around Tabuk, Tayma, Madain Saleh, al-Ula, Khaybar and Hail (the traditional homeland of the legendary Thamudic tribes). These are the areas surveyed and investigated by many archaeologists and epigraphists such as Jaussen and Savignac (1914), Winnett and Reed (1937), Ryckmans and Philby (1951), Harding, Parr and Dayton (1971) and several others, but these and other archaeologists paid little or no attention to rock art material from the said region, and no proper study on rock art of the area has ever been conducted. The theories put forward by epigraphists and philologists are hypothetical and lack any solid evidence to support their views. No attempt has ever been made to interpret the rock art of Saudi Arabia or to look into the possibility of the evolution of Arabian scripts through the prehistoric pictographic communication system of Arabia which I propose here. The possibility that the Bedouin (Thamudic) script might have evolved from Musnad al Janubi (EṢA) or that being a Bedouin script it may have been a distorted form of the South Arabian script, does not appear to be convincing. In my suggested "Bedouin" (Thamudic) script, there are several forms for each alphabetic letter. Thuse for "a" there are six different forms; similarly for "w" there are six forms and so on. One can actually see an evolution and development within the Bedouin (Thamudic) script. This might suggest a script which was still undergoing development. On the contrary, Musnad - al-Janubi is a highly advanced and well established script, It may therefore be suggested that Musnad al-Janubi might have evolved from the oldest script of Arabia "the Bedouin" (Thamudic), and is perhaps an offshoot or an advanced form of the Bedouin (Thamudic) script. The oldest Musand- al-Janubi inscription so far located dates back to approximately 800 B.C (Jamme 1968; Winnett and Reed 1978). This inscription however, represnets a fully developed script which again raises a question about the period of its development. Supposing that Musnad- al-Janubi (ESA) is an offshoot or a developed form of Bedouin (Thamudic), then its origin could safely be placed between 1200 BC - 800 B.C. could safely be placed between 1200 BC - 800 B.C.

The theme of evidence can therefore be interpreted as suggesting that "Bedouin" (Thamudic) was the oldest script of Arabia, and that it had evolved independently within the Arabian Peninsula from an earlier pictographic system of communication.

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PLATES

The sequence of plates accords with the practice of Arabic language publication (ie. from right to left)

انجليزي Eng.	الترتيب العربي الكامل للحروف Arabic	عبرى Hebrew	سبأي Sabaen	لحياني Lihyanite	ثمودي Thamudic (Bedouin)	صفوي Safaitic
a	ا	א				
b	ب	ב				
j	ج	ג				
d	د	ד				
dha	ذ	ד̄				
ha	ه	ה				
w	و	ו				
za	ز	ז				
h	ح	ח				
kh	خ	ח̄				
th	ط	ט				
dh	ظ	ט̄				
ya	ى	י				
k	ك	כ				
l	ل	ל				
m	م	מ				
n	ن	נ				
s	س	ס				
Aa	ع	ע				
gha	غ	ע̄				
F	ف	פ				
Sa	ص	צ				
dh	ض	צ̄				
Q	ق	ק				
r	ر	ר				
Sh	ش	ש				
ta	ت	ת				
tha	ث	ת̄				

Comparative chart of Ancient Arabian Scripts. جدول لمقارنة كتابات الجزيرة العربية القديمة.

علامات البادية القديمة «الوسوم» والتي يشار لها بـ ◦ غالباً مطابقة لحروف البادية «الثمودية».

Proto - Bedouin "Word Signs". Signs indicated by * are almost identical to the Bedouin or "Thamudic" alphabets

CHRONOLOGY OF SAUDI ARABIAN ROCK ART

Evolutionary emergence of writing from rock art images

التسلسل التاريخي للرسوم الصخرية في المملكة العربية السعودية

Rock art of Phase I:human and animal figures in naturalisitc style.

رسوم المرحلة الأولى : أشكال آدمية وحيوانية بالحجم الطبيعي.

Phase II: Schematised human and animal figures.

المرحلة الثانية : أشكال آدمية وحيوانية تخطيطية.

Phase III: highly Schematic / abstract human representations.

المرحلة الثالثة : أشكال آدمية مختصرة (تجريدية) لأقل حد ممكن

Phase IV: Stick human and animal rspresentations.

المرحلة الرابعة : أشكال آدمية وحيوانية عودية

a	ha	h	da	sh	dh	sa	k	ka	b	R

Phase VI : Evolution of alphabetic letters from rock art images.

المرحلة الخامسة : نشأة الحروف الأبجدية من الرسوم

Plate 20

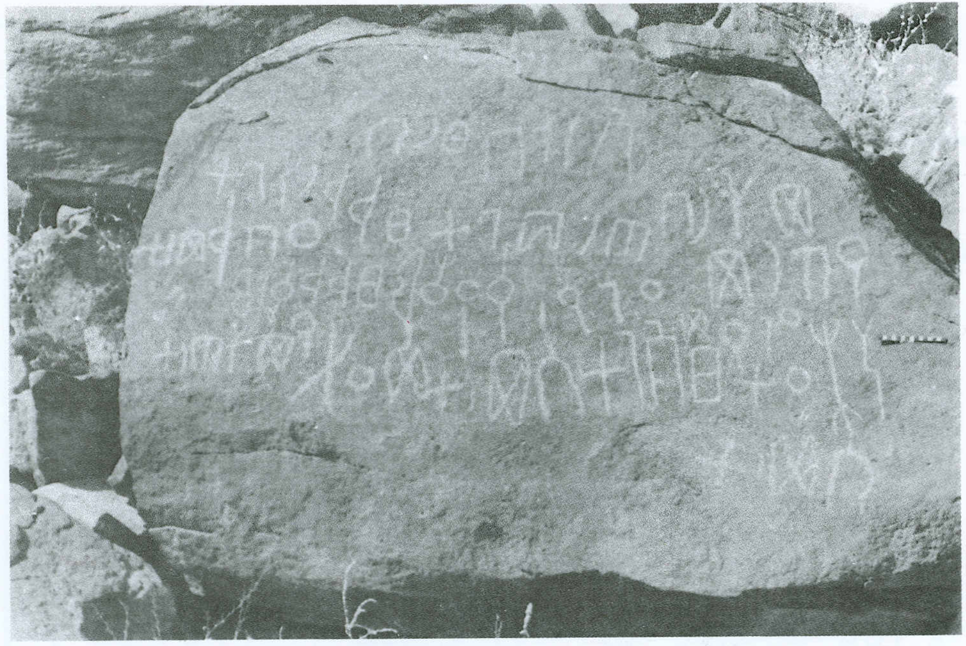
لوحة ٢٠

Plate 19 — لوحة ١٩

رموز لوحة البادية القديمة والتي تطابق أبجدية البادية «الثمودية»

Proto - Bedouin signs which are identical to the Bedouin (Thamudic) alophabets:

البادية القديمة Proto-Bedouin	بدوي (ثمودي) Bedouin (Thamudic)	عربي Arabic	انجليزي Eng.
		أ	a
		س	s
		ت	t
		ع	a'n
		ك	k
		ح	h
		ن	n
		ل	l
		ح	ha
		ب	b
		ص	sa
		ج	J
		ب	b
		هـ	ha
		ق	o
		ش	Sh
		ط	ta
		ذ	dha



A. A large Thamudic (Bedouin) Inscription.

أ ــ نقش ثمودي «بدوي» طويل.



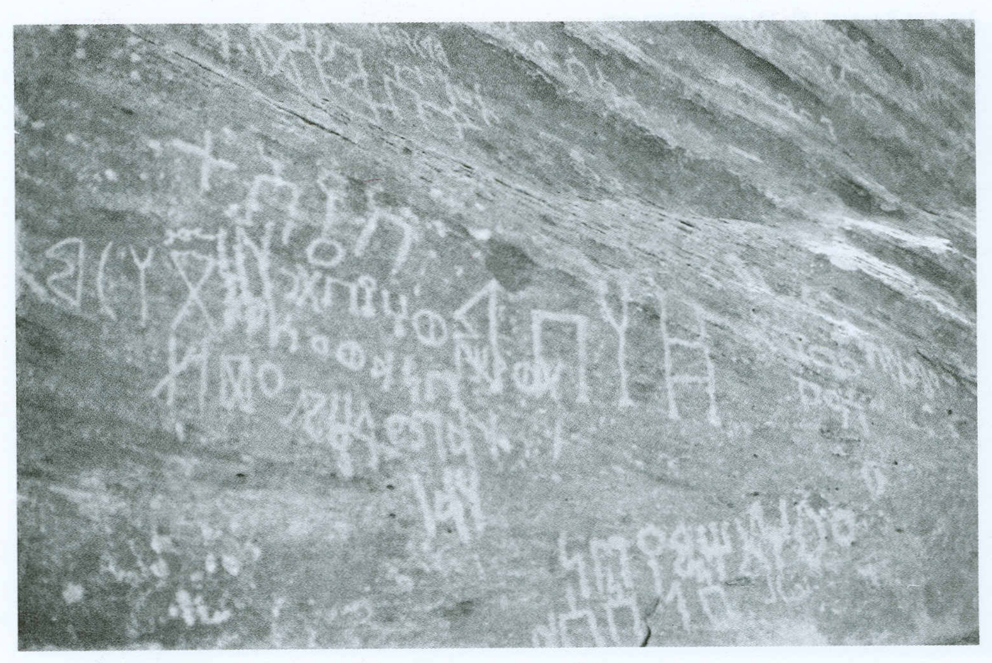
ب ــ نقش مسند جنوبي (الجزء السفلي الأيمن)، لون غشاء العتق داكن، بير حما ــ نجران.

B. Musned al-Janubi (right lower corner) and darkly patinated almost fading earlier Thamudic (Bedouin) inscriptions located at Bir Hima, Najran area.



أ ـــ نقش مسند جنوبي وآخر ثمودي (بدوي) من نجران، لاحظ لون غشاء العتق.

A. Musnad Janubi and Thamudic (Bedouin) Inscriptions from Najran. Note the difference in patina.



ب ـــ نقش مسند جنوبي متعاقب على نقش ثمودي «بدوي» بير حما ـــ نجران.

B. Musned al-Janubi superimposed on earlier Thamudic (Bedouin) inscriptions. Bir Hima, Najran area.



أ ــ دليل لنشأة وتطور الثمودية «البادية» محلياً، ويلاحظ اختلاف لون غشاء العتق، جبل كوكب، بير حما ــ نجران.

A. An evidence of the local evolution and development of Thamudic (Bedouin) inscription. Note the lightly patinated developed form and an earlier darkly painated crude form of the inscription located on Jebel al Kaukab, Bir Hima, Najran area.



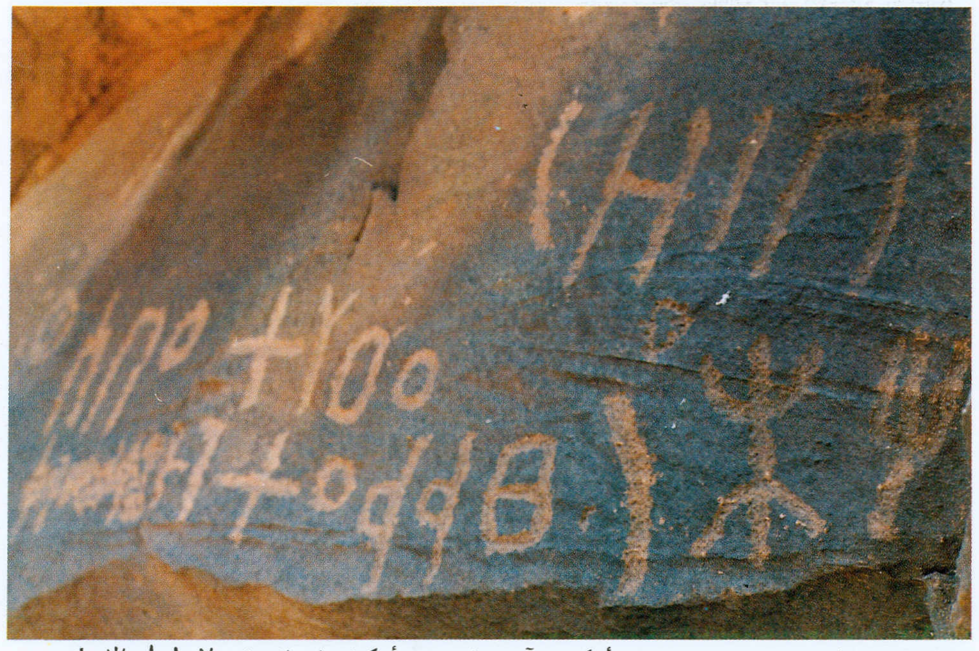
ب ــ مثال آخر من جبل كوكب. بير حما ــ نجران.

B. Lightly patinated Musned Janubi (left) and earlier depicted Thamudic (Bedouin) inseriptions located on Jebel Kaukab, Bir Hima, Najran ares.



أ ــ علامات لحروف ثمودية تمثل تكرار للحرفين « أ » و«ق»، سكاكا ــ الجوف شمال المملكة.

A. Thamudic alphabetic signs from Sakaka, north of Saudi Arabia. Note the signs " X " or A and " ϕ" or Q are repeated.



ب ــ نقش ثمودي، ويلاحظ استخدام الأشكال الآدمية العودية وبأشكالها المبسطة مثل : Y ᛘ ᛣ ᛯ ᑫ

B. An Example of a Thamudic inscription. Note the use of human stick figure and its simplified forms such as : Y ᛘ ᛣ ᛯ ᑫ



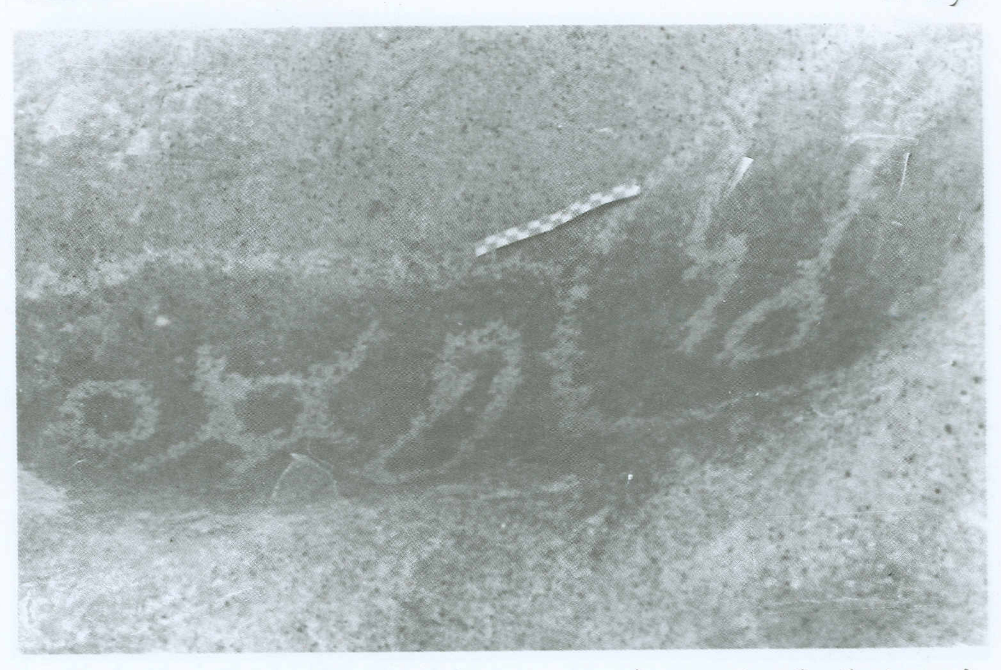
أ ــ مثال لنقش ثمودي صغير ــ جنوب المملكة.

A. An example of a small Thamudic inscription from South of Saudi Arabia.



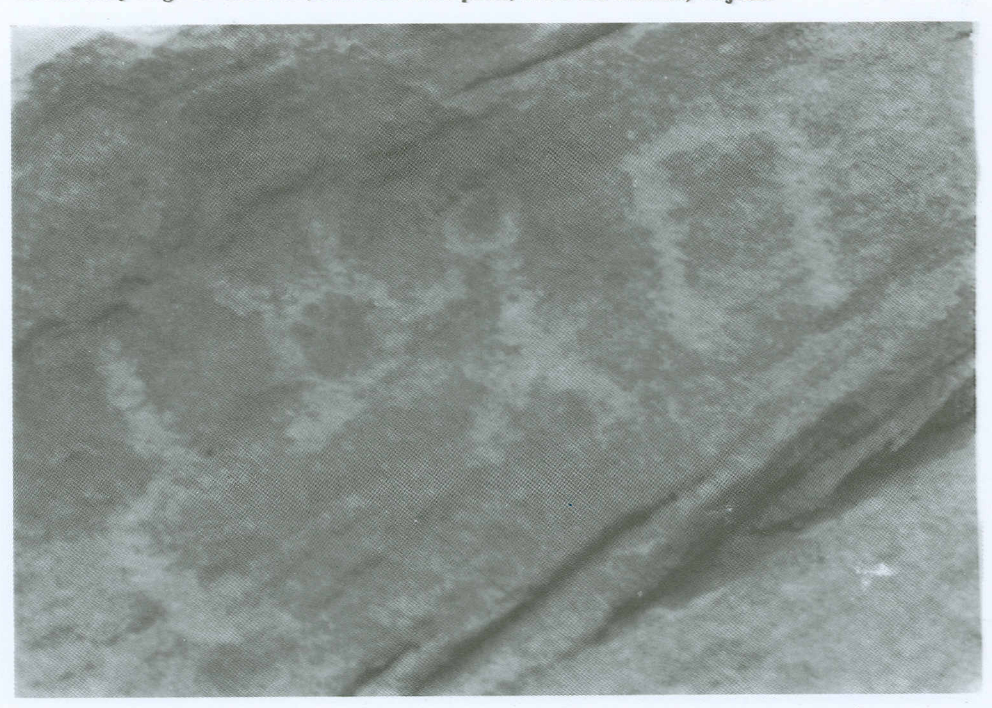
ب ــ نقش ثمودي آخر ــ نجران ــ المنطقة الجنوبية، لاحظ استخدام الشكل الآدمي العودي في النقش الموضح بعاليه.

B. Another Thamudic inscription from Najran, southern region. Note the use of human stick figures in the above inscription.



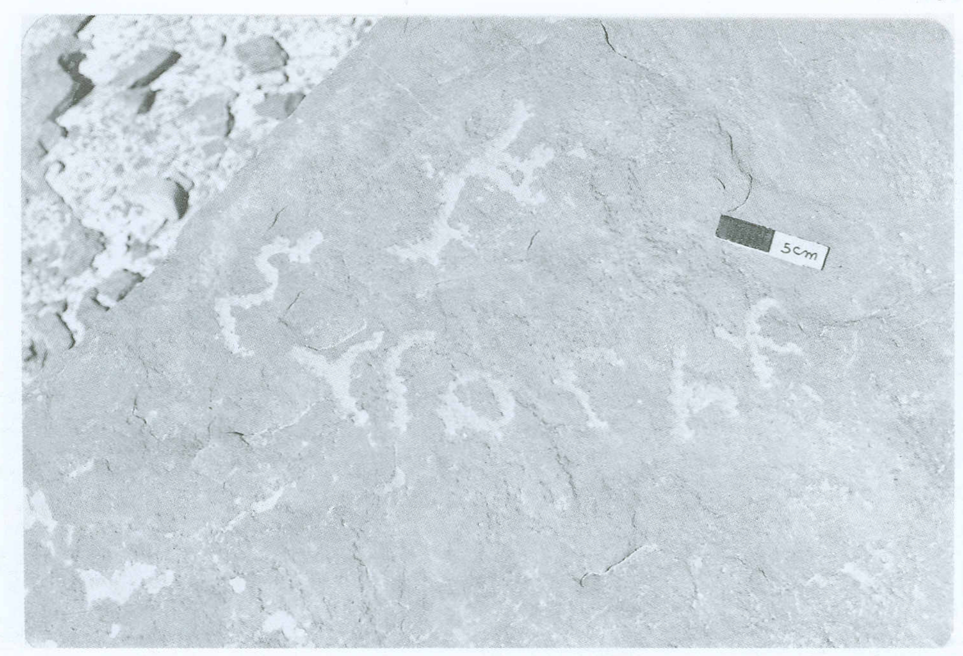
أ ـــ مرحلة مبكرة لكتابة البادية (نقش ثمودي) ـــ بير حما ـــ نجران.

A. An early stage of Bedouin (Thamudic inscription) from Bir Himma, Najran.



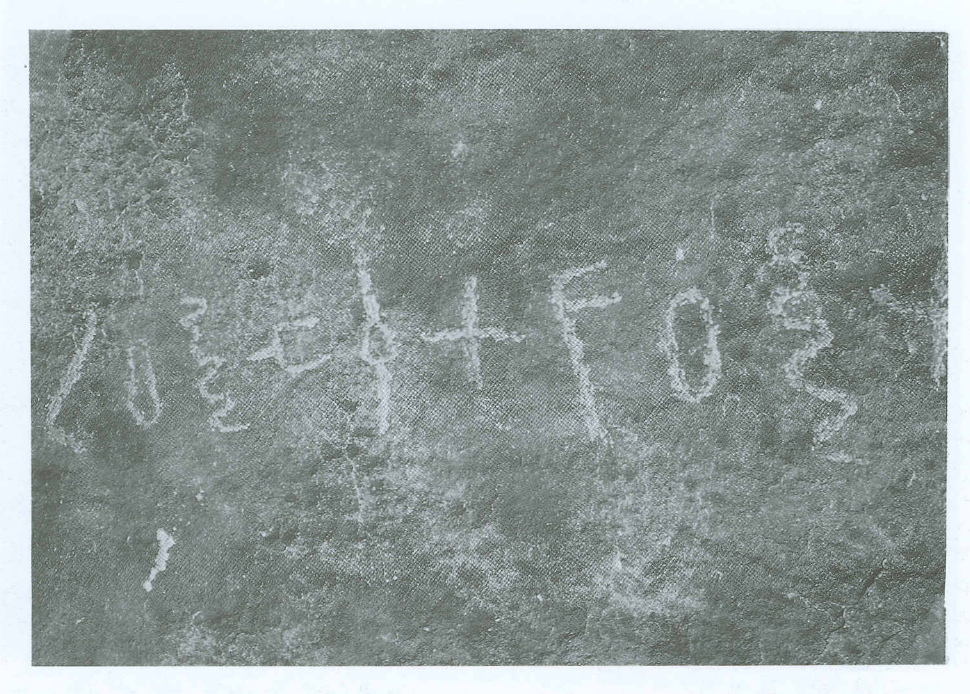
ب ـــ مثال آخر لنقش ثمودي، بير حما ـــ نجران.

B. Another example of Bedouin (Thamudic) inscription in its early developing stage, Bir Himma,Najran ares.



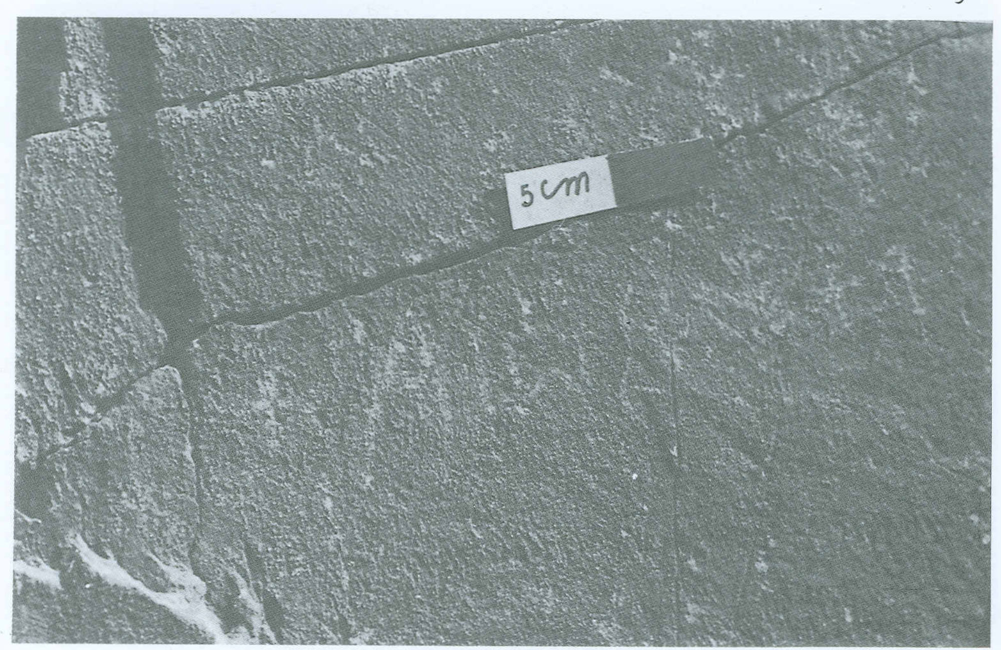
أ ــ نقش غير متقن لمرحلة مبكرة لكتابة البادية «ثمودية» تيماء ــ شمال غرب المملكة.

A. Crude form of an early stage of Bedouin (Thamudic) inscription from Tayma. northwest of Saudi Arabia.



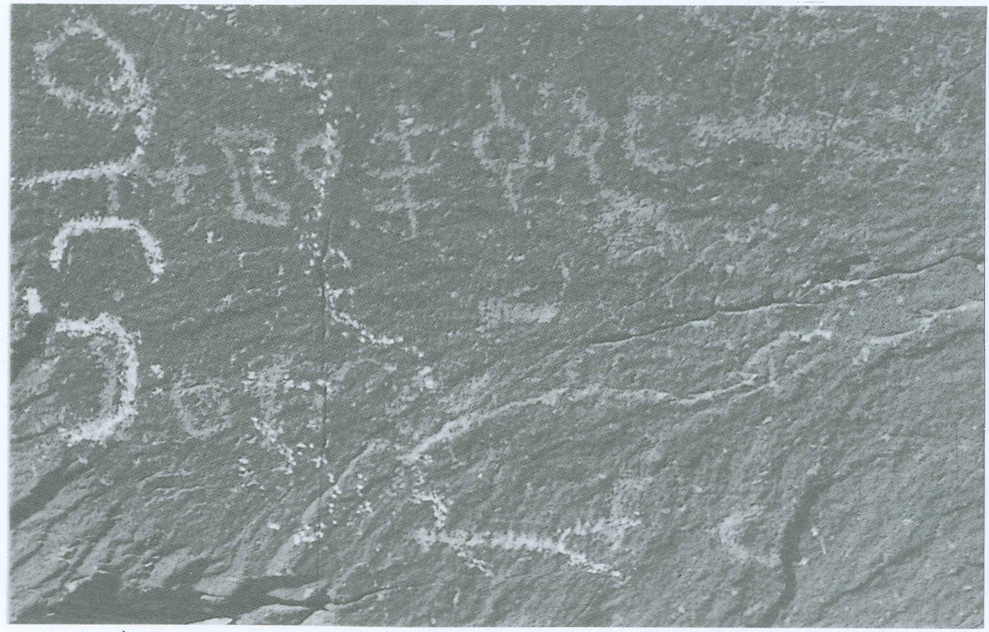
ب ــ مرحلة متطورة لنقش بادية «ثمودي» ــ نجران.

B. Developing stage of Bedouin (Thamudic) inscription from Najran area.



أ ــ شكل مبكر لنقش يدوي «ثمودي» قرب بيشة جنوب المملكة. ويلاحظ علامات حروف غير متقنة مثل «   »
و«   »

A. An early form of Bedouin (Thamudic) inscription located near Bisha, South Arabia. Note the crude form of various alphabetic signs such as "   " and "A".



ب ــ مثال آخر من بيشة، ويلاحظ تغير الشجرة من «   » إلى «   »، ربما يدل على تطور الحروف داخليا.

B. Another example of Bedouin (Thamudic) inscriptiuon from Bisha. Note the development of the tree like form "   " into "   " thus suggesting the evolution and develpment of letters within the internal structure.



أ ــ مثال للمرحلة الانتقالية لنظام الكتابة، حيث تم استخدام أشكال هندسية وعناصر غير تصويرية.

A. An example of transitional period of writing system in which more geometrical and non representational signs are used.



ب ــ مثال آخر لتحول الأشكال الآدمية العودية إلى علامات هندسية بسيطة، وعلامات غير تصويرية ــ تيماء ــ شمال غرب المملكة.

B. Another example of the change from human stick figures to simple geometrical and non representational signs. From Tayma, NW Saudi Arabia. An example of developing stage of cursive form of writing.



أ ــ مثال لكتابة البادية القديمة (التصويرية ــ الرمزية) ــ العلا ــ شمال غرب المملكة.

A. An example of Proto-Bedouin (pictographic cum ideographic) writing system from al-Ula, northwest Saudi Arabia.

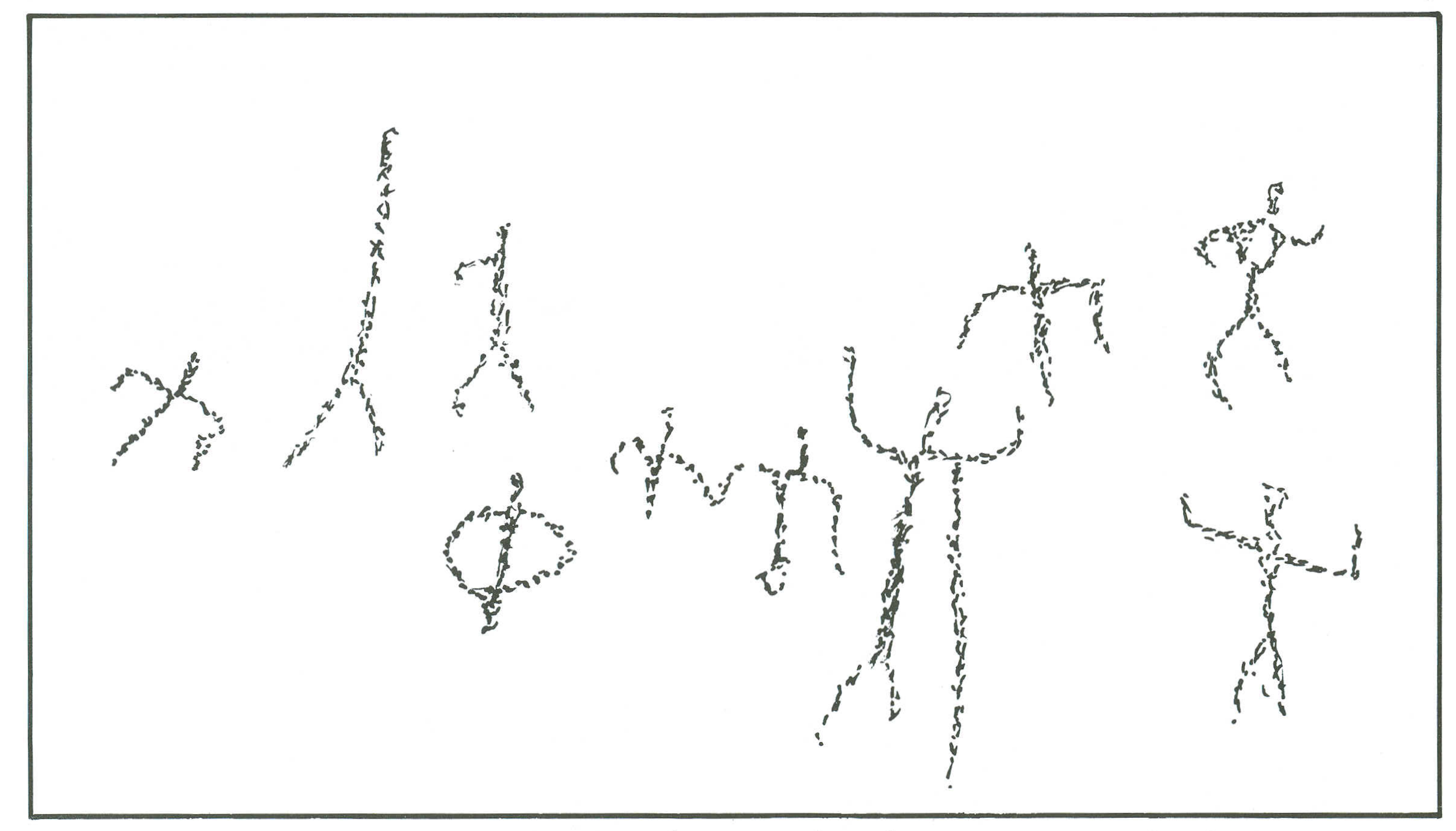


ب ــ مثال آخر لنظام كتابة البادية القديمة، ويلاحظ استخدام الأشكال الآدمية والجمال في الكتابة.

B. Another example of proto - Bedouin writing system. Note the use of human & camel figures in the inscription.

Plate 8

لوحة ٨



رسم للوحة (٧ ب)، مجموعة أشكال آدمية عودية من جنوب المملكة، الأشكال الأربعة اليسرى، غالباً مطابقة لحروف ثمودية.

Tracings of plate 7 B. A composition of human stick figures from Southern Saudi Arabia. The left four figures are almost identical to Thamudic letters.

Plate 7 لوحة ٧



أ ــ لوحة كبيرة لمجموعة أشكال آدمية عودية مختلفة الأوضاع ــ تبوك ــ شمال غرب المملكة.

A. A large composition of human stick figures in different postures located at Tabuk, northwestern Saudi Arabia.



ب ــ مثال آخر لعدة أشكال آدمية عودية، بشكل تخطيطي، وأوضاع أطراف مختلفة.

B. Another example of a schematic arrangment of various human stick figures with varying limb positions.



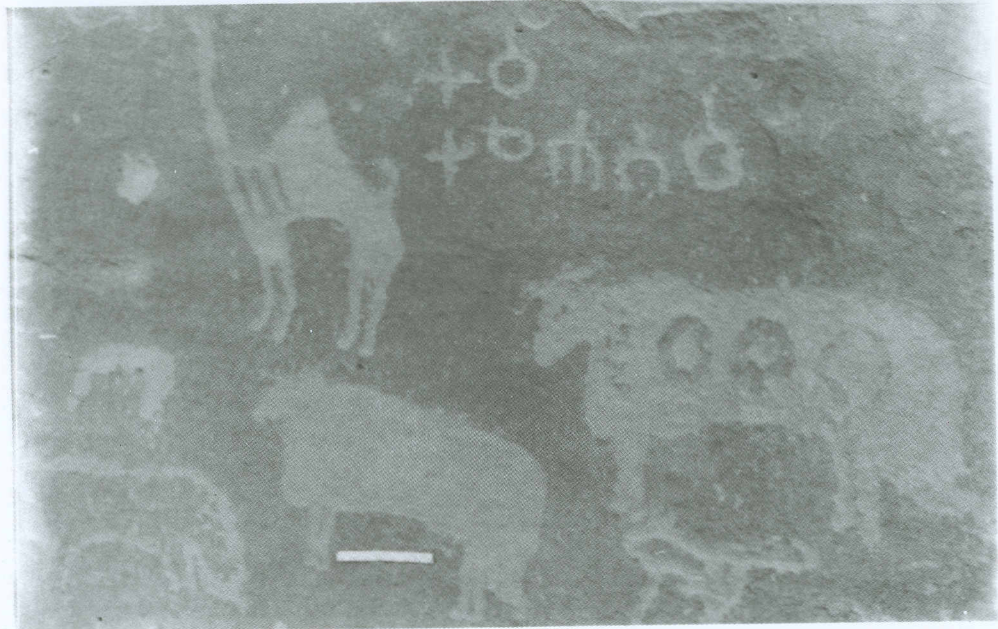
أ ـــ رسوم صخرية تمثل المرحلة الرابعة، عبارة عن خطوط خارجية لأشكال آدمية وحيوانية ويعتبر ظهور الجمل هو الميزة التقليدية لرسوم هذه الفترة.

A. Rock art of phase 4 — Outlined human and animal figures and the appearance of camel are the typical features of this phase.



ب ـــ مثال لمجموعة أشكال عبارة عن خطوط خارجية لأشكال آدمية وحيوانية وكذلك أشكال عودية ـــ المرحلة الرابعة.

B. An example of various outlined and stick human and animal figures of phase 4.



أ ـــ «وسوم» علامات الجمال، وعناصر دائرية وشكل ماعز صغير.

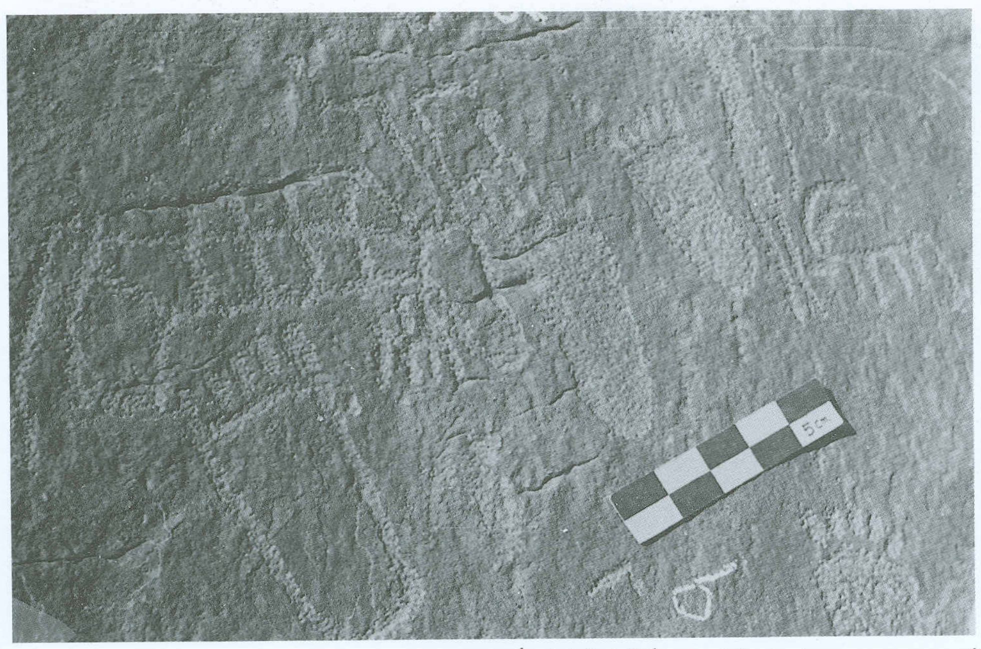
A. "Wusum" camel brand and a circular motif on goat body.



ب ـــ عناصر مختلفة وخطوط خارجية لأشكال آدمية وحيوانية.

B. Various motif and outlined animal figures.

Plate 4 لوحة ٤



أ ــ رسوم صخرية المرحلة الثالثة، مع أشكال تخطيطية أخرى.

A. Rock art of phase 3 — A composition of various human and animal figures, outlined and schematised, along with other motifs.



ب ــ مثال آخر لرسم تخطيطي لعدة أشكال آدمية وحيوانية، المرحلة الثالثة.

B. Another example of a schematic arrangement of various human and animal figures of (phase 3).



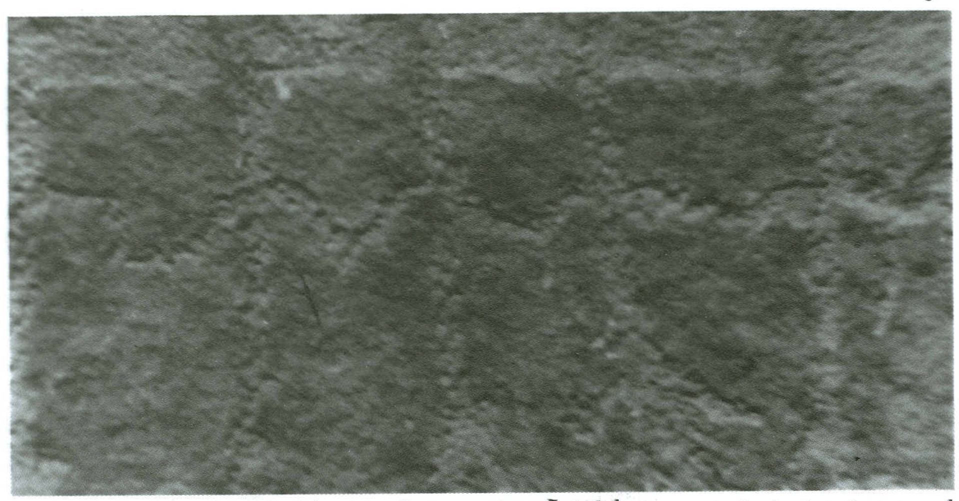
أ ــ رسوم صخرية المرحلة الثانية والثالثة، أشكال رعول نقرت بالكامل المرحلة الثانية، وخطوط خارجية المرحلة الثالثة، جبه ــ شمال المملكة.

A. Rock Art of phase 2 and 3: Fully pecked ibex figure of phase 2 and outlined caprines of phase 3, from Jubbah, northern Saudi Arabia.



ب ــ حيوان بخطوط خارجية، المرحلة الثالثة، متعاقب فوق شكل حيوان نقر كلي من المرحلة الثانية ــ تبوك ــ شمال غرب المملكة.

B. An outlined animal of phase 3 superimposed on fully pecked animal figure of phase 2 from Tabuk, northwest Saudi Arabia.



أ ــ رسوم تمثل المرحلة الثانية : مجموعة أشكال آدمية في وضعية رقص ــ منطقة حائل.

A. Rock art of phase II: A group of human figures in dancing attitude from Hail area.



ب ــ رسوم آدمية وحيوانية، بقر كامل، تمثل المرحلة الثانية من الصويدره.

B. Fully Pecked human and animal figures of phase II from Suwedrah, near Medina al-Munawara.

Plate 1 | لوحة ١



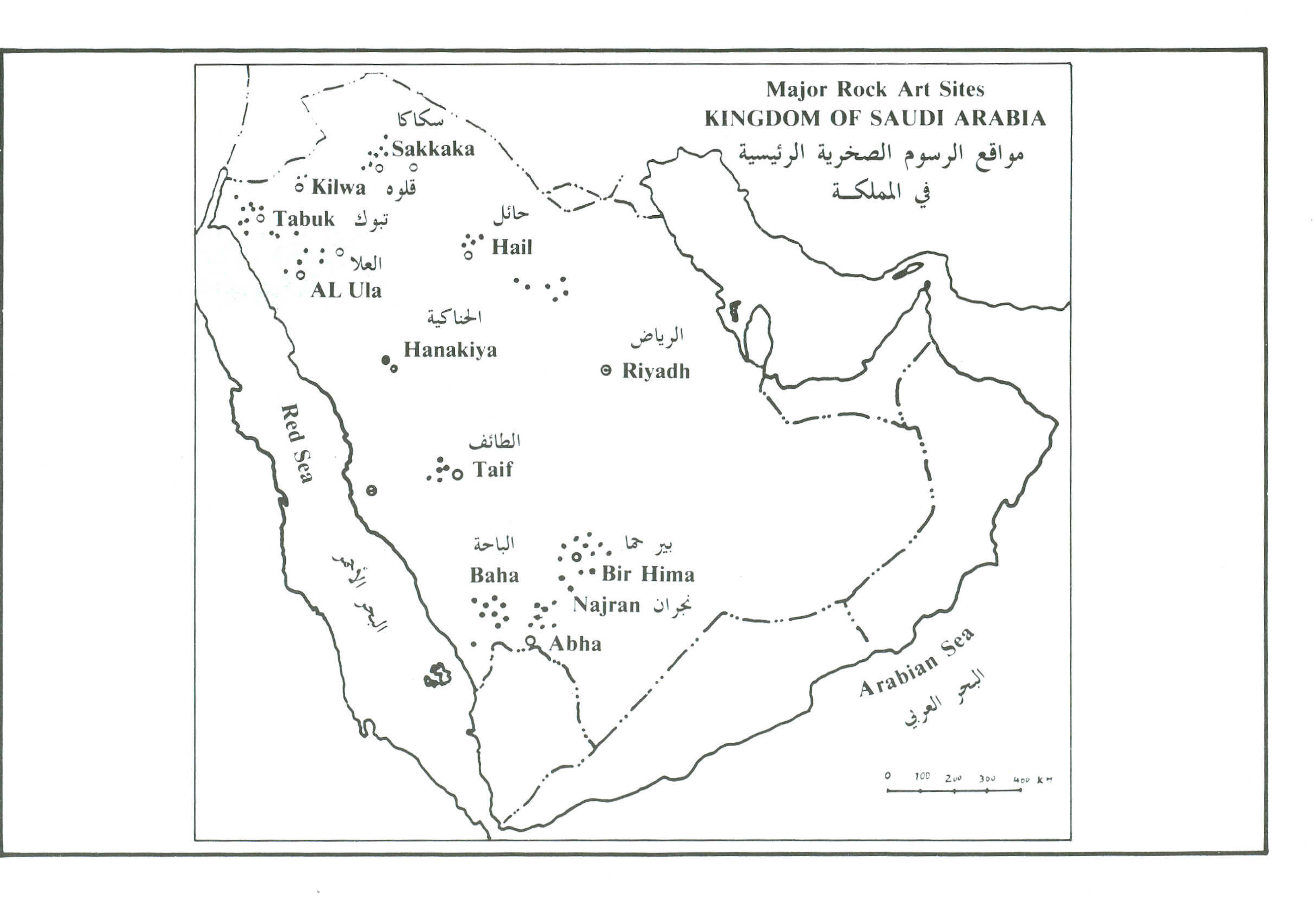
أ ــ رسوم صخرية تمثل المرحلة الأولى : عبارة عن أشكال آدمية واضحة ومفصلة المعالم الجسدية ــ جبه، شمال المملكة. ويمكن تمييز ٣ مراحل.

A. Rock art of phase I.A composition of human figures depicted with detailed physical features, from Jubbah - north of Saudi Arabia. Three phases could be recognized.



ب ــ ثور ضخم حضر بطريقة النحت الغائر، مثال أشكال المرحلة الأولى التقليدية ــ جبه.

B. Large ox from Jubbah depicted in low relief typical representation of phase I.


Major Rock Art Sites
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA
مواقع الرسوم الصخرية الرئيسية
في المملكـة
سكاكا
Sakkaka
Kilwa
قلوه
Tabuk
تبوك
العلا
AL Ula
حائل
Hail
الحناكية
Hanakiya
الرياض
Riyadh
الطائف
Taif
الباحة
Baha
بير حما
Bir Hima
Najran
نجران
Abha
Red Sea
البحر الأحمر
Arabian Sea
البحر العربي
0 100 200 300 400 KM